





LIBRARY
OF THE
UNIVERSITY
OF ILLINOIS



7
Have Missions to the Heathen
been a Failure?

BEING

A REPLY TO SOME CURRENT
OBJECTIONS

BY

REV. A. R. SYMONDS

FORMERLY SECRETARY S.P.G. MADRAS

LONDON: GEORGE BELL & SONS
YORK STREET, COVENT GARDEN .

1873

NOTE.—The following Paper was originally drawn up with a view to its being read at a Meeting of friends and supporters of the S.P.G. It is now printed and published in the hope that it may serve the Missionary Cause at large.

HAVE MISSIONS TO THE HEATHEN BEEN A FAILURE?

IT cannot be disguised that at the present time no little misgiving prevails as to the success of Missions, even on the part of those well affected towards them ; while others are not only sceptical as to their results, but question at the outset their policy and propriety. Now this, I think, is not altogether to be regretted. In the end it will work for good. A state of controversy is a state of life and interest : men do not debate what they have no interest in, or what they deem of no value or importance. Anything is better for a great cause than dull apathy towards it ; it had far better be the subject of keen and even hostile remark than be regarded with indifference. So far, therefore, I am glad to see Missions a subject of controversy, even though we, who are practically connected with them, may have to undergo some sharp and perhaps, occasionally, not altogether just criticism or accurate representation. For let it be candidly acknowledged, that there is, and has been, much in Missionary plans and proceedings to provoke remark and question ;

that mistakes both of policy and practice have been made ; that the work admits of improvement and invigoration. It is to be hoped, then, that the discussion which Missions are now undergoing will in the end be to their furtherance, by bringing about greater efficiency in the machinery employed. We all want looking after, Missionaries and their managers as well as other folks ; and the scrutiny they are now being subjected to will do them no harm, but good. It will put them on the *qui vive*, it will stimulate to fresh effort, it will lead to the searching out and setting right of what is erroneous and defective. More than this, it will serve to bring out more vividly and distinctly what Missions are doing and have done, and to convince many that they have far too easily taken it for granted that Missions are a failure. If it causes the exposure of imperfections and defects, it will tend also to the clearer demonstration of their beneficent results. As one who has been for many years intimately associated with Missionary work, there is nothing I more desiderate than that it should be closely and minutely scrutinized, because I have ever found that those who make themselves best acquainted with it become its truest friends. The more our Missions are subjected to inspection and their results examined, the more I feel assured it will be made to appear that, notwithstanding infirmities in the agents and imperfections in their system, it is a work that has been followed by effects beautiful and blessed ; in a word, that it has been

owned indeed of God, and has been stamped with the Divine seal of grand and gracious results.

I have at the outset spoken thus, because in entering, as I now propose, upon some defence of Missions, I wish it to be seen that I do so in no blind zeal of mere partisanship, but in a spirit of candour and fairness, and as one quite conscious of and desiring to amend faults in our plans and proceedings. If, then, I do not dwell on those faults, it is not because I ignore them, but because my immediate object is to meet and to reply to certain current objections, and to reassure the minds of those who, while friendly to Missionary effort, entertain misgivings as to what it has accomplished.

The impugnors of Christian Missions may, perhaps, be classed under three heads. First, there are those who, *ab initio*, take exception to Missions as needless, if not mischievous; as mistaken both in principle and purpose. Secondly, there are those who, while not condemning Missions in the abstract, regard them, under present circumstances, as misdirected benevolence; they deprecate the expenditure of men and material abroad, while so much remains to be done at home; they point to the immense amount of practical heathenism in England, and they bid us concentrate our energies and means upon the reclaiming of our own population from ignorance and vice, before we attempt the evangelization of foreign lands. Then, thirdly, there are those who, while thoroughly approving of Missions,

and desiring their success, write bitter things against the present system of Missions, complain of the agents employed in them as inefficient, if not worse, and either angrily denounce our Missions or mournfully lament them as a failure. Now in regard to the first class of impugners, it is enough to reply that, as Christians—and we cannot argue the thing from any other standpoint than that of Christianity—that as Christians we have no option in the matter. The command of the Great Head of the Church is express and plain : “Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature, making disciples of all nations.” And this, also, were a sufficient answer to the second class of objectors, who would have us restrict our Missionary enthusiasm to the lost ones of our own country. But apart from our Lord’s direct command, which leaves us, I submit, no alternative, we may appeal to His own example and that of His Apostles. His own personal ministry, it is true, was almost exclusively exercised on behalf of the lost sheep of the House of Israel, but in His visit to the regions of Tyre and Sidon, and in His work of might and mercy there, He did not fail to indicate that His saving grace and truth contemplated a wider range than Israel. Surely, in that deliverance from a devil of the daughter of a woman of Canaan, a child of the old accursed race, surely in that touching fact, there was gracious prelude of that mission of mercy on which St. Paul was sent to the heathen, to open

their eyes, to turn them from darkness unto light and from the power of Satan unto God. The Apostles did, indeed, as their Master bade them, preach repentance and remission of sins, *beginning* at Jerusalem. But did they stay there? Behold, in a few years the Word of the Lord had sounded forth, from Jerusalem and round about as far as Illyricum; yea, so far and wide, that St. Paul speaks of the Gospel as present in all the world. And yet, be it remembered, while thus, to use an apostolic expression, the Gospel was being preached in all creation under heaven, *at that very time*, when he was evangelizing the heathen, there were but few converted of those for whom his heart's desire and prayer were that they might be saved. While he had such heaviness and sorrow in his heart, that he could wish himself accursed from Christ on behalf of his brethren, his kinsmen according to the flesh, yet *at that very time* was St. Paul expending his energies and strength mainly in the conversion of the Gentiles, though thousands upon thousands of the lost sheep of the House of Israel had not been recovered and brought into the fold. To be consistent, then, our modern objectors to Missions must needs pronounce St. Paul to have been in error in concerning himself about the heathen at all while his own people remained in unbelief. But the objection now under view is in fact as futile as it is unscriptural. Truth cannot but be aggressive and expansive; it refuses to be restricted within any territorial confines; it

bursts forth beyond the limits of country, caste, or kindred. That holds good of all truth ; how eminently so of that which is associated with the moral and spiritual welfare of man, now and hereafter, which has promise of the life that now is as well as of that which is to come ! It is of the nature of truth to be unselfish, but these objectors would impose on us a policy of intense selfishness, when they denounce the propagation of the Gospel in foreign parts as inconsistent with home demands ; a selfishness the more monstrous and glaring when it is remembered that England itself is so conspicuous an instance of the benevolent operation of Missionary zeal, being, as its Christianity is, the fruit of seed sown by Missionaries from abroad. Shame, then, upon those who grudge the men and the money expended on Missionary enterprise ! Having as freely received, shall we not as freely give ? Were it even at some loss to home interests, yet could we not stay our hands and our hearts from the work which the Lord's command imposes on us. But it is not at a loss. In the keeping of God's commandments there is ever great reward, and in none more than in acting out that great commandment, to preach the Gospel to every creature. "He that watereth," is the promise, "shall be watered also himself." Eminently is the promise realized in connection with Missionary benevolence ; such benevolence returns sevenfold into our bosoms. So far from home work suffering by reason of foreign work, it ever the more prospers

as the other prospers. Let the one languish, the other will languish. We do not find that they who look coldly on Missions to the heathen feel the more or do the more for Missions at home. On the contrary, they who have most promoted the former have ever been the most earnest, energetic, and liberal supporters of the latter. Vitality at home finds ever an outlet in effort abroad. The energetic exhibition, therefore, by the Church of a Missionary spirit is no mean proof of its own life and vigour.

I come now to those who either angrily complain of or sadly doubt the efficiency and success of Missions to the heathen. In reply to these, I must call attention to the indirect influence and collateral effects of Missionary enterprise, as well as to its more specific achievements in the evangelization of the heathen. Apart from their proper spiritual results in the way of conversions, Christian Missions exert in various ways a beneficent influence, and the one is often preparatory to the other. It is fair that both should be taken into account. I claim for Missionary enterprise that it has been most honourably associated with human progress and improvement; that it has been to a large extent the pioneer of civilization; that it has been the initiator and promoter of education and of other means of social amelioration; that its literary achievements have not been few or contemptible; that it has contributed in no inconsiderable degree to science, ethnological and philological.

We are told that men of power as well as piety are required for Missionary work. I fully admit it. Would to God such men were multiplied a hundred-fold ! But this outcry is sometimes raised as if the Missionaries had only been a puny and a feeble race ; as if there had been no men of mark and of might among them. But who, I ask, have been more assiduous and successful cultivators of foreign literature than the Missionaries ? And is it not to their researches that we owe much of what we do know of Oriental systems of religion and philosophy ? By whom has the Bible, that great source of moral and intellectual improvement, been translated into such a multitude of languages ? Who are they that have produced the grammars and lexicons of these languages ? Let the names of Beschi and Martyn, of Carey and Yates, of Medhurst and Morrison, of Ellis and Winslow, of Caldwell and Bower, not to mention many more, be some answer to this question. The illustrious Max Müller himself testifies to the literary value of Missionary enterprise. By whom in thousands of places has the first school been planted, the first printing-press set on foot, the first book depôt opened ? Who is it that have led the way in education ? In India, many fields now cultivated by Government agency were originally broken up by Missionary labour. And not only have Missionaries been *pioneers* of educational enterprise, but by them is it still largely conducted and sustained. I refer in proof of this to Duff, and Wilson, and Anderson,

with their successors, to Marsh and Miller, to Marks and Hall, to the Jesuit Fathers at Negapatam, with others now at work in the Mission field. Again, is it not owing in some degree to the earnest representations and remonstrances of Missionaries and their friends that many abominations of heathenism in India have been put down, such as the burning of widows, the hanging festivals, and the glaring obscenities that used with impunity to be obtruded on the public eye? May not our Missionaries and their Societies take some credit to themselves for the divorce that was at last effected between Hindu Idolatry and Government? I know, indeed, it has been sometimes said, on account of the agitation they raised on these and other points, that the Missionaries are regarded by Government officials as a meddlesome, mischievous, and troublesome race. But so far from this being the case, I feel assured that the Indian Government and its officials would bear cheerful testimony to the wholesome influence of the Missions in promoting goodwill to our rule among the people. Indeed, I should fearlessly advance this as one of the beneficial results of Missions. Even the old Court of Directors, with all its timidity on the subject, sanctioned a grant of Rs. 350 a month in aid of Mission schools in the districts of Tanjore and Ramnad, partly in honour of those venerable men Schwartz and Kohlhoff, and partly in recognition of the good influence exercised by such schools in making the people well affected towards the Government. That grant con-

tinues to this day, and is still known as the Schwartz Grant. Well might the Court delight to honour the man who, in a time of extreme peril, mediated between the Government and its formidable foe, Hyder Ali. Once more, I claim for Missionary enterprise in India that even where it has not resulted in the direct open profession of Christianity, it has done much to diminish the tyranny of caste, to loosen the hold of Brahminism on the people, to shake the fabric of idolatry, to set before the Hindus a higher standard of truth and purity, to quicken the intellectual activity of thousands and to give it a nobler character, to evoke an admiration of the Gospel for its moral beauty and benignity, and to inspire a reverence for the character and teaching of Jesus Christ on the part of many who have not been brought so far as to acknowledge Him as the Divine Saviour. I freely admit that in some of the facts just specified, such as the loosening of caste and idolatry, much must also be attributed to the operation of Government education, to railways, and the like; but on the whole, looking generally at the effects of Missions, other than those of specific conversions to Christianity, I do confidently submit that in number and extent they have not been few or small; that in character and quality they have not been inconsiderable or contemptible.

And when we come to look at the direct results of Missions in the way of accessions to the Church of Christ, I am bold to say, that so far

from Missions having been a failure, success has largely attended them; that though that success might have been yet greater, with more zeal and energy and wisdom and faith on our part, we have still abundant reason to thank God and to take courage. In speaking on this point I shall draw my facts and illustrations from India, because that is the country with which I am myself most familiar, and partly because it is in respect of Indian Missions, I believe, that scepticism and misgiving are chiefly felt. And in speaking of Indian Missions I must confine my attention to the results of Protestant Missions. Not that for a moment I ignore or undervalue the work of the Missionaries of the Church of Rome in India. On the contrary, I know that they reckon their adherents by tens of thousands. I know that very many of those Missionaries are most devoted and earnest men, setting us all an example of self-denying zeal. I know some of them personally, and esteem them highly for their own sake and for their work's sake. I regard the educational efforts of the Jesuit Fathers at Negapatam with both great interest and respect. If, therefore, I do not quote facts from the Missions of the Church of Rome, it is simply because I have not the statistics at hand to enable me to do so. Looking then to the results of Protestant Missions, I ask, is it to be regarded as a failure, when the S.P.G. alone can point to nearly 24,000 baptized Christians as its own adherents in the one Diocese of Madras (of whom

about 6,000 are communicants), besides 7,600 catechumens? Have the Missions of the Church of England in that Diocese been a failure, when, putting together the adherents of the C.M.S. and S.P.G., the members of our Church there number more than 66,500 (16,500 being communicants), together with 21,478 catechumens? Have Missions generally in the Presidency of Madras been a failure, when, as ascertained by the census recently taken, the adherents of the several Societies in that Presidency amount to 161,000? Can Missions in India at large be called a failure when, reckoning together the adherents of the several Societies labouring there, the number is found to be 224,000, 53,000 being communicants? Including those in the adjacent provinces of Ceylon and Burmah, the whole aggregate mounts up to 318,000.

To the foregoing facts let me add that in the Diocese of Madras there is now a native ministry of about 100 Hindu pastors, and in India at large of 230, these native ministers being to a large extent sustained by the native Christians themselves. Add to this, that the contributions of the native Christians of India for religious and charitable objects now exceed 8,000*l.* a year, and again I ask, have Missions there been a failure? Then look for a moment at the educational efforts of the Missionary Societies. Look at the 9,008 pupils in the S.P.G. schools of the Diocese of Madras; add to these the 18,426 pupils in the C.M.S. schools,

and we see that in this one Diocese the Church of England alone has under instruction 27,434 children of various ages. Add to these the pupils in all the Mission schools throughout India, and there are 123,000 pupils under Christian teaching. In connection with the subject of education I must remark, that not only was female education entirely initiated by the Missionaries, but that it is still mainly in their hands. Now, no one will question the importance of female education as an element in the moral advance of a people. Whatever has been done there in this way, and it has not been small, is to the credit almost exclusively of Missionary enterprise.

The census, to which I just now referred, was taken at the beginning of the year 1872 for the ten previous years. Comparing the results of this census with that taken at the beginning of 1862, we find there has been most cheering progress; that in the last decade more than 100,000 souls have been added to the Church of Christ in India, Ceylon, and Burmah; that the Native Ministry has wonderfully grown both in numbers and in local support; that the number of Communicants has been more than doubled; that the Pupils under instruction have been increased by more than a third; and that, whereas in the whole ten years between 1851 and 1861 a sum of only about 93,000 Rupees was raised among the native Christians, their contributions now exceed *Eighty Thousand Rupees a year*. In the face of these facts can it, I

once more ask, be with any fairness said that Missions in India have been a failure?

But here I shall, perhaps, be asked, "How is it, if all this be true, that so many come home from India, civilians and officers, and tell us that Missions are doing nothing? how is it, that the report of many should be such as to embolden one notorious impugner of Missions to declare that the Missionaries in India are an idle and self-indulgent race of men?" Before I answer these questions, I will take the liberty of asking one of my own. To say that Missions are doing nothing, is to say that the Missionaries themselves are all fools and fanatics, or, still worse, shameless impostors, to be carrying on such a delusion and a sham. But putting this aside, how is it, I ask, that so many men in India, civilians, officers, merchants, and others, take deep interest in Missionary work, largely aiding it by their contributions, and taking part in the practical direction of it by joining our Committees of Management? How, too, is it, if Missions are mere moonshine, that men of high moral worth and intelligence, on coming home, bear distinct testimony to their reality and value, and become active supporters of Missionary Societies?¹ I place the positive testimony of the one against the non-testimony of the other. The latter say, "We did not see anything doing;"

¹ See on this head the testimonies of Lord Lawrence, Lord Napier and Ettrick, and Sir Bartle Frere, lately published by the S.P.G.

the others say, "We saw much being done." Which testimony, I ask, is to be most relied on? The positive testimony is the testimony of those who had opportunities, or made themselves opportunities, of seeing Mission work, who took pains to inquire into it and to assure themselves of its value, notwithstanding all admitted defects and imperfections. On the other hand, there are those who know nothing of it because they have not been brought into contact with it, or have not concerned themselves to look into it. If a man may live in a large London parish and know little or nothing of the religious work going on in it, if a man may live all his life in England and be ignorant as to its religious organizations, their structure and practical results, (and with how many is this the case), then is it any strange thing that a man may live many years in a country of such vast extent as India, with its Christian Missions dotted here and there upon its broad surface, and know little or nothing of their existence or working?

In speaking of the many thousands of native Christians I shall perhaps be asked, "And what are these native Christians? Are they worthy of the name; is their walk and conversation such as becometh the Gospel of Christ? We have heard persons from India say that some of the worst specimens of Hindus they have known were native Christians. Is this so?"

In reply to this I might, perhaps, advert to the

painful fact, that if Europeans see such miserable specimens of Hindu Christians as to provoke their contempt and disgust, Hindus on their part see too often such unhappy specimens of European Christians as to make them doubt the superiority of Christianity to Hinduism. Not unfrequently do the Heathen use a taunt of this kind, "Why come ye to convert us, when your own people are so evil? We do not see that your religion secures purity and truth on the part of its professors." There is no Missionary but knows to his cost what a stumbling-block to the work of evangelization is the ungodliness of his own countrymen in India. I say it boldly, that it is not for European Christians to speak contemptuously of Hindu Christians. If there be vile ones among the latter, there are also vile ones among the former. And what is chiefly distressing is this, that nowhere is seen so low a type of Hindu Christianity as in cantonments and towns where it is brought into near and constant contact with our own people. There it is that they too often are to be met with, who, Christians only in name, are a disgrace to their profession, and bring awful reproach upon native Christianity. It is from seeing only, or chiefly, such as these that many in India imbibe a prejudice against Missions, and speak contemptuously of native Christians. But that these are fair specimens of our Hindu Christians generally I utterly deny. So far from this being the case, I fearlessly

assert that, taken as a whole, we have not only no reason to be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ in relation to them, but that, on the contrary, we have much cause to be glad that by the grace of God they are what they are, as converts from heathenism. If there be much to deplore, there is also much to be thankful for. I candidly admit there *is* much to deplore. But what then? Is this any real argument against Missionary effort? Will you take advantage of this admission to infer that nothing, or but little, has been gained by so many thousands having embraced Christianity, and by their having been brought within the pale of the Christian Church? I ask you to look at your own England. You call it a Christian country; you say that its population is a Christian population. What do you mean by that? Is it not a mournful fact that some of the worst specimens of humanity that the world exhibits are English Christians? Do not drunkenness, debauchery, violence, commercial dishonesty, and other sins, stalk through this Christian land in huge and hideous proportions? What is your answer to that? Do you not say that so it ever has been and will be; that in the Church the evil is mingled with the good; that as the wheat grows up the tares grow up also, and that Christianity is not to be judged by the inconsistent lives of mere professors? Is that in some measure your apology for Christian England, and are we not at liberty to apply it to the Christian

population of India? Would you, as I take for granted you would, earnestly protest, that notwithstanding all the acknowledged vices that disgrace England and shame her Christianity, still it is a priceless blessing and advantage that the Gospel of Jesus Christ should be the recognized religion of a people? We insist upon the same in regard to our Christian communities in India. Do you feel that where Christianity is the acknowledged religion of a country, there the distinctions between right and wrong are sharpened and intensified; there the moral sense is quickened and informed, as is nowhere else so done; that there you have a standard of good to appeal to, vastly superior to anything provided by heathen ethics; that there the more rampant the agencies for evil may be, the more will the agencies for good be multiplied and developed to counteract them; do you feel and recognize all this in relation to Christian England, then permit us to feel and recognize the same in relation to our Christians in India. We admit that among these there be many weak and unworthy ones, many who enfeeble our hands and sometimes almost break our hearts; but for all that we feel that as Christians they are on a higher platform of truth and motive than before; that they have reached a better standpoint; that a holier standard of right is recognized, to which we can appeal in dealing with their consciences and directing their conduct; that influences are at work among them, more potent and

persuasive to deter from evil and to incite to good; than any to be found outside of Christianity. Therefore, notwithstanding all that grieves and hinders, we can still say, looking at our Hindu Christians, we are not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.¹ If there are certain patent defects in Hindu Christianity, there are also special excellences. They exhibit a simplicity of faith, a quiet dependence on the goodness and wisdom of God, an unquestioning submission to His will, calm resignation under trouble, and confidence in the efficacy of prayer, which again and again I have felt to be both touching and edifying. Anyhow I am quite sure that we English Christians live in far too large a glasshouse to make it prudent and proper for us to throw stones at Hindu Christians. Of this, too, I am sure, that were a number of our native Christians to visit England, and to be shown the wickedness to be seen in it, they would go back to their own land sorely pained and puzzled to understand how that country, from which their own Christianity had been derived, could be as to thousands of its inhabitants so worldly and so wicked.

I conclude as I began. I acknowledge that there is much in our plans and proceedings that requires invigoration and modification; nevertheless, let the results of Missions be fairly and candidly considered, let them be looked at in the light of Scripture, of

¹ *In the Appendix will be found some valuable remarks by the Rev. Dr. Caldwell on this subject.*

Church history, and of our own experience, and I am bold to say that so far from deeming Missions a failure, we shall see that they have been greatly owned of God, that through them He *has* been pleased to make known His way upon earth, His saving health among the nations.

APPENDIX.

THE following extract from a sermon by the Rev. Dr. Caldwell, on the text "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ," and entitled "Christianity in India and Indian Christians," will be read with interest. The sermon was preached to an English congregation at Palamcottah, Tinnevely, in the year 1866.

"I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ or of its propagation in India, seeing that by its power of producing, when truly received, the tone of mind and style of character I have described, it proves itself to be able to supply those very elements of character of which India stands most in need.

Let it be remembered at the same time, however, that everything which is indigenous to India is not evil, that 'God has not left Himself without a witness' in any part of the world, and that Christianity does not repudiate, but adopts and consecrates, those characteristics of the Hindu race which are good and laudable in themselves. Thus it adopts and consecrates their instinctive religiousness, their habit of seeing God in all things and all things in God, and of withdrawing no department of things from His will and power, their patience and temperance and gentleness and courtesy, their care for their relations to the furthest remove, and the patriarchal framework of their social system. Only let the still more important elements of individual and national character which are produced by the Gospel and the Gospel alone, be superadded to these and similar peculiarities of race, and the result will be found to be a style of character of which neither India nor the Gospel will have need to be ashamed.

I proceed to say that I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ or of its propagation in India, when I look at its results.

I freely admit, indeed, that what has been done in India, as yet, is as nothing in comparison with what remains to be done. We are only, as it were, putting on our armour for the most momentous contest in which the Church of Christ has ever been engaged, and it does not become him that putteth on his armour to boast himself as he that putteth it off. Yet making all due admissions and deductions, it is my firm persuasion notwithstanding, a persuasion that has not been hastily arrived at, that looking at the results of the propagation of the Gospel in India, amongst a people far more difficult to reach and move than either Greeks or Romans ever were, we have no reason to be ashamed of the measure of success that has been attained.

Apart from the direct efficacy of the Gospel in the salvation of those who believe, Christianity has conferred upon the most influential portion of the native community intellectual and moral benefits of the highest importance, and won for itself in consequence a position as a power in the country of which no thoughtful Christian need feel ashamed.

When I look at the large and rapidly increasing class of educated, enlightened Hindus which has come into existence during the last twenty or thirty years through the progress of education, through Christian education in Christian schools, and in a still larger degree from the education communicated in Government schools, an education which, though it does not include distinctive Christian teaching, is yet to a certain extent a Christian education, Christian in its negations, its exclusion of everything opposed to Christianity, and Christian in its morality and the principles of action it teaches or encourages; when I see idolatry and mythology driven out of the field of argument, in so far as this educated class is concerned, the mysticism and sensuality and low tricky morality of Hindu books disowned, as completely as by ourselves, and the literature of a Christian nation, deeply imbued as that literature is with Christian principles, adopted and studied by them instead; when I see the belief they have acquired in a Supreme God, not a belief, such as Hindu philosophy taught, that the world was God or that God was the world, but a belief in a God who is the Creator of the world, not again a belief, such as Hindu philosophy taught, in a God who is an unconcerned spectator of the contest going on between good and evil, but a belief in God who is moral Governor of the world, a Being who is on the side of good and who makes all things work together eventually for good; when I see the intellectual convictions of this

educated class, and in many cases their sympathies, arrayed on the side of truth, honour, justice, public spirit, universal benevolence, virtues which are part and parcel of the Christian character, but which heathenism never had and never even felt the want of; when I see that above all they have acquired a conscience, a conscience testifying in their breasts, as in ours, in behalf of God and goodness, how little soever at times it may make itself heard and compel obedience in them or in ourselves; when I see that people have ceased to fear, as at one time they feared, and as I well remember their fearing, that we were raising up by our new system of education a more dangerous class than any that ever existed in the country before, a class whose faith in their own religion was shaken or destroyed, but who had not adopted any other religion instead, and that on the contrary the members of this new class are admitted, as a general rule, to be better men, better citizens, better servants of the State than any other class of natives the country ever knew; when I see, in consequence of all this, the difference there is, I will not say between the India of a hundred years ago, but between the India of thirty years ago and the India of to-day, in the ideas, tone of mind and tendencies of its most influential classes; though I am aware that the vast majority of this class have not become Christians and will probably die, as they have been living, in nominal heathenism, though I am aware also that some of them are unwilling even to render Christianity its due by crediting it with the Christian ideas and feelings they have adopted—yet, looking at all that has been brought about, directly by Christian teaching and indirectly by the Christian influences brought to bear on public education, I hold that we have no reason to be ashamed of the efforts that have been made for the propagation of the Gospel in India, efforts without which neither the mental and moral enlightenment we see spreading around us, nor any of the fruits of that enlightenment, would have had any existence.

The special object aimed at by Christian men, the conversion of individuals, may only partially have been accomplished; yet the means they have used for the accomplishment of this object have brought into existence, perhaps without their intention or even contrary to their wish, a whole class of agencies of a more or less decidedly Christian character, by which national results of the greatest possible importance have been produced.

The natives of this country, the educated no less than

the uneducated, perhaps I might say the educated in a still greater degree than even the uneducated, are slow in acting on their convictions, timid in resisting popular prejudice, and sensitive in an extraordinary degree to domestic influences. Hence it may happen that the whole mind of India will have to become leavened with Christian ideas, as thoroughly as the mind of the educated class now is, before any great movement of the masses towards the public adoption of Christianity commences. We ought not to doubt, however, we cannot doubt, of final success. 'The vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it will speak and not lie. Though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come;' and when it does come, it will probably be found that it is all the more complete and harmonious in consequence of having been long deferred.

When we come to the direct results of the propagation of the Gospel in India, I fear I must expect that some who have accompanied me hitherto will now stop short or range themselves on the other side. A mere statement of the case, therefore, with respect to what has been done, though it might suffice in England, will not suffice in this country. If I do not reply to objections I might as well be silent.

The first objection ordinarily met with is, that the number of converts that have been made, even supposing them all to be real converts, is so small as to render it doubtful whether it is really the will and intention of Divine Providence that India should ever be Christianized, and doubtful, in consequence, whether the Missionary cause in India is really one which it is the duty of every person to help forward to the utmost extent of his power. Are those who make this objection to Missionary work in India aware that in this District alone the native Christians connected with the two Church Societies number 54,000 souls and are constantly increasing in number? And that the number in the adjoining district of South Travancore, connected with the London Missionary Society, now reaches 26,000? If they are aware of these facts and adhere to their objection notwithstanding, because the number is not still greater, I fall back upon a position which will be found to be impregnable. That position is, that numbers are no test of the goodness of any cause, much less of the cause of God in a rebellious world, and that neither present success nor present failure is any criterion of religious duty. The Gospel pledges itself to save every one that believeth, and is willing to stand or fall by that test, but refuses to pledge itself that

a given number of persons in any country shall become believers within a given time. It is no shame to the light that it is preceded by darkness, and that the darkness gives place to it slowly. When we find the majority anywhere of opinion that dishonesty is the best policy, the only result is that we think it all the worse for that majority, no matter how overwhelming a majority it may be ; we pity that majority and hope it will see its error in time ; we never think of feeling ashamed of honesty, on account of the low estimate in which it is held, but on the contrary are as firmly persuaded as ever that it is the best policy, and that sooner or later it will gain the day. Just so, whilst I admit that we might be ashamed of the Gospel if it did not confer what it promises, or if it did not effect what it undertakes, so long as the only objection to its claims is that they are admitted only by a minority, so long as the only objection to its propagation is that it does not spread as fast as we could wish, we may safely content ourselves with asserting that we believe it to be from God all the same, and certain to triumph in the end all the same. It is ours to labour with patience and faith, but not ours to make ourselves responsible for success. It is Paul that plants and Apollos that waters, but it is God that giveth the increase ; and though we may be in a hurry and get disappointed, it is never so with Him. 'His purpose stands, and He will do all His pleasure.' His word shall not return unto Him void ; but though it may not accomplish all that we wish or expect in any given place within any given time, it will accomplish that which He pleases and prosper in the thing whereto He sent it.

It is a more common and still more serious objection to the reality of Missionary work in India that the converts that have been made, whether their number be large or small, are represented as being Christians only in name. This is an objection which one meets with or hears of very frequently in this country ; and it may almost be represented as a general rule that native Christians are regarded by the English residents in India as people who are deserving only of their contempt. I fully acquit those who take this view of intentional injustice or misrepresentation ; but I believe them to be mistaken, and I think I can point out the origin of their mistake. Their direct acquaintance with native Christians is very slight and superficial, and almost every idea they entertain as to what Christians are or ought to be, is founded on what they know or imagine they know of Christians of their own race. They take it for granted that

English Christianity is substantially faultless, and when they happen to meet with any native Christians and proceed to measure them by this standard, the Christianity of the natives appears to them as something so inferior to English Christianity, that they feel tempted, not only to be ashamed of it, but also to be ashamed of the efforts which have ended in producing only such results.

There was a time, I admit, when I was accustomed to compare the two classes of Christians in something of this spirit myself, and when, even in my endeavours to defend the native Christians from unmeasured censure, I was accustomed to admit as a matter of course the vast inferiority of their Christianity to that of Europe. I would ask that allowance should be made for the infancy of the Native Church and the natural inferiority of the Hindu, both in mind and body, to the European. I would argue that we could not reasonably expect a clay model, still in the hands of the sculptor, to equal the beauty of a marble statue which had received almost its last touch from the sculptor's hands. I would plead for time, and ask that we should show towards the weaknesses of Indian Christians the same charity and forbearance which we claimed for the weaknesses apparent at one time in our own nation, at the commencement of its Christian history.

Since that time I have had an opportunity of revisiting England, and of getting much better acquainted than I ever was or could be before with the real condition of all classes of people in England, down to the lowest class. I have had an opportunity of correcting the superficial impressions of youth by the careful observations of riper years. The public in general are also, I think, much better informed now with respect to the real condition of the various classes that make up the mass of English society, than it used to be in the days that preceded Social Statistics. The consequence is that now I feel at liberty to take higher ground; and not only do I not feel disposed now to be ashamed of native Christianity, but I declare that the longer I live and the more I see and hear and read of what takes place in the world, I see the less reason for being ashamed of it, even when placed in comparison with the old Christianity of European nations.

'To compare ourselves amongst ourselves' may not be 'wise,' but we cannot avoid dealing with a comparison, however unwise or unpleasant it may be, which is forced upon us. I therefore accept the issue, and only ask that the comparison be fairly made: for it is the unfairness with

which it is sometimes conducted, not the comparison itself, that is fitted to mislead.

Let me here mention what appear to me to be the conditions of a fair comparison.

The native Christian community in a mass should be compared, not with particular individuals in the English Christian community, but with an equal portion of the mass of that community. Each community has its nominal Christians, in a greater or less degree restrained and improved by their knowledge of the truth; and each has, or professes to have, its real Christians, sanctified by the truth. The mass should therefore be compared with the mass, the select few with the select few. If we have been speaking of 'Native Christians,' and have been using the term in the wide meaning it has in that connection, as denoting native Christians in a body, without discrimination of class from class, it will not be fair to employ the word in another sense, as soon as we begin to speak of English Christians, denoting then not the English community in a mass, which is composed of Christians by profession in a mass, but only such English people as we consider to be Christians indeed. If, for instance, we wish to estimate fairly the 80,000 native Christians in this and the neighbouring district, we must compare them, not with the select few of the English religious class, or with the larger but still limited number of the English respectable well-principled class, but with any mass of 80,000 English people taken indiscriminately, educated and uneducated, religious and irreligious, reputable and disreputable. It matters little whether we take the entire mass of the inhabitants of an English town, with a population of 80,000, or the whole of the inhabitants of a country district in England containing a like population, or 80,000 of the English resident in India, including all classes, gentlemen, artificers, and private soldiers.

Again, the classes that are to be compared should as far as possible be classes that hold a corresponding position in society. Thus the native Christian labourer should be compared, not with the English farmer, but with the English labourer; the native Christian farmer, not with the English squire, but with the English farmer; the native Christian domestic servant, not with the English masters and mistresses, but with the English domestic servant.

Again, we ought not to compare a real picture of native Christianity with an ideal picture of English Christianity, but should endeavour to keep to the reality in one case as

carefully as in the other. In depicting native Christianity the scene we paint is one that is spread out before our eyes, or at least it is spread out distinctly enough before the eyes of those of us who are Missionaries, so that we can hardly fail to put in its shadows correctly. In depicting English society, which is far off out of our sight, we are in danger of drawing our colours from our imaginations or our patriotic feelings. We are in danger of being misled even by our memories, for the knowledge of the various classes of English society most of us possessed before we came out to this country was very slight indeed, and, possibly extended little if anything beyond our own family circles. We must take care, therefore, that the England we paint, and which we compare with the native Christian community of this country, is not an ideal England of our own, all churches and virtuous firesides, with no such places in it as gin-shops, and haunts of vice, and prisons, and no such people in it as drunkards, profligates, swindlers, murderers, blasphemers; but, on the contrary, such a real England, with all its real goodness and its not less real badness, as would be admitted to be in accordance with the reality by those most competent judges, the English clergyman and the English surgeon.

I add that we shall come to no conclusion at all, or be led into a wrong conclusion, if we content ourselves with comparing the two communities, with respect to the position occupied in each of them respectively, by some particular vice, without considering to what extent that vice is hereditary, and to what extent each class has succeeded in overcoming or modifying it. It may be admitted that the special national vice of the people of India, as of most Oriental nations, is untruthfulness. It may also be admitted that the special national vice of the English, as of most of the Northern nations, is intemperance. In each case the prevailing vice is an inheritance received from a long succession of previous generations. It is not a thing of recent origin or a local peculiarity, but is a national and hereditary evil; and in each case the development of the evil in individuals is stimulated by the mental and constitutional bias which they have brought into the world with them. The real question, therefore, is not whether the English are more truthful than the natives, nor whether the natives are more temperate than the English, but whether the Anglo-Saxon race has made more progress since it embraced Christianity towards mastering their traditional vice of

intemperance than the Christians of this country have made, in proportion to the shortness of the period in which they have been Christians, towards mastering their traditionary vice of untruthfulness. This is an intelligible issue, and one which is fair to both sides ; but though it is a fair issue, I fear the result would be found to be pretty nearly as unsatisfactory in the one case as in the other. Christian principles are at work in each community, but it is chiefly individuals here and there that exemplify their power, and their influence on the masses is not very conspicuous. Hence, whilst it would be necessary to admit, and every Missionary does admit, that the native Christians of this country have not made satisfactory progress in learning to be truthful, on the other hand there are not wanting persons who are ready to maintain that the heathen ancestors of the English race were not more intemperate than the mass of their Christian descendants are at the present day.

There has been a great improvement within the last fifty years amongst the upper and middle classes in England, but it may fairly be questioned whether any improvement is apparent, as yet, as regards the drinking usages of the masses.

Again, if we claim the right of judging, we should concede the right of being judged. With whatsoever measure we mete, it is but fair that we should allow it to be measured to us again. We are ready enough to judge other races, and ready enough to proclaim our judgment to the world, but we are apt to forget that those other races may be disposed to judge us in return. When the lion in the fable was shown the picture of a man vanquishing a lion, he observed that the subject would have been treated differently if lions had been the painters. Possibly we should find in like manner, if we endeavoured to ascertain the opinion of native Christians respecting our superiority to them in all moral and religious qualities, that it differed considerably from ours ; but whether it differs from ours or not, and whether it is a correct opinion or not, it is an opinion which claims to be heard and weighed equally with our opinion of them. It is a fact well known, to persons who have lived long in the country, that the natives are well acquainted with the private habits and real character of all the Europeans in the neighbourhood, and we shall greatly err if we fancy that when they hear of the language in which we sometimes speak of them, they will refrain from making any remarks to one another about us in return, and from drawing in-

ferences from what they know respecting our morals and religious peculiarities as a nation. To my mind, indeed, the wonder is that they should venerate Christianity, and respect the European as a race, so much as they do.

When the comparison is conducted after this manner, it will probably be found that they who were at first most desirous of instituting a comparison between 'the people of England and the native Christians, for the honour and glory of their own race, will be the first to wish it to be dropped. It is very desirable, indeed, that such comparisons should be dropped, especially if one of the races compared should be found to insist on making itself a judge in its own cause. Sweeping condemnations provoke only sweeping retaliations. When any Christian race, how highly soever it may be endowed, and how great soever may have been its services to mankind, exalts itself above every other race, in the fashion in which the Jews exalted themselves over the Gentiles as described by St. Paul in the second chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, when it sets itself up as a 'guide to the blind, a light to them that are in darkness,' a standard of universal excellence, a universal and infallible judge, it naturally draws upon itself the Apostle's rebuke, 'Thou art inexcusable, O man (O people), whosoever thou art, that judgest, for thou that judgest doest the same things.'

It were much more becoming for each race to humble itself in the dust before God on account of its deficiencies, than for either to profess to be ashamed of the other. It were better for each to pray, with the Publican in the parable, 'God be merciful to me a sinner,' than for either to thank God, with the Pharisee, 'Lord, I thank thee that I am not like this (Indian or that English) publican.'

Setting aside all prejudices of race and colour, the following may perhaps be accepted as a fair view of the relative position of the two varieties of Christianity.

Indian Christianity neither rises so high nor sinks so low as English. England is a country of bright lights and of deep shadows. In India, or rather in the Indian Christian community, bright lights and deep shadows are almost unknown, and we see generally instead the equable grey light of a dull day. If there are fewer specimens of great excellence in the native community than in the English, there are also fewer specimens of great depravity. The great gifts which God has bestowed upon the English race are oftentimes turned by the devil into great crimes. The Indian

race, less highly gifted, possessing less to answer for, has a smaller reward to expect and a lighter punishment to fear.

Hitherto I have been speaking of the Native Christian community as a whole, with the view of ascertaining whether we have any reason to be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, with respect to the results it has produced in it as a community.

It remains that I should say something of a class included within that class, the class of persons who really believe what all profess to believe, and to whom the Gospel is 'the power of God unto salvation.' Here I expect to be met with the expression of a doubt whether any such class of persons is to be found in the native Christian community; and possibly this may be followed up by the expression of a doubt, which is almost as common, whether any such class of persons is to be found anywhere.

I admit that the native Christians who are to be regarded as earnest consistent Christians form only a small minority of the total number; and will not this have to be admitted to be the case in every portion of the Christian Church? But if the existence of any real Christians whatever in the native Christian community is doubted, it may safely be affirmed that the doubt proceeds from persons who are unacquainted with the interior of our Missions. If it be objected that the existence of this class of persons depends on the testimony of Missionaries alone, who are interested parties in the case, and is not confirmed by the testimony of judges, magistrates, and other official persons who are brought so largely into contact with natives, I reply, how could it be otherwise with respect to an entire half of this class, the women, who are never seen or heard of by any Europeans but the Missionaries? How could it be otherwise, also, with respect even to the men belonging to this class, except under some very extraordinary circumstances, seeing that it is of the very essence of the character of such persons that they are not litigious or quarrelsome, and that they do not 'strive or cry, or cause their voice to be heard in the streets.' I may add that if the judges and magistrates in England differed from the people of the country in race, caste, modes of life and language, and had no means of forming any opinion respecting the existence or otherwise of real Christianity amongst the mass of the people, except from the impression produced in their minds by the parties who appeared before them in their courts, the opinion they arrived at respecting English Christians in general would probably be far from being a favourable one.

I can bear testimony from my own personal knowledge, and my testimony is that of a person who has long had excellent opportunities for ascertaining the truth of what he says, I can bear testimony from my own personal knowledge to the existence among the Christians of this country of a class of persons, small in number, but 'precious in the sight of the Lord,' who have a right to be regarded as real Christians. They are a small, but an increasing class; and I hold, that taking fairly into consideration the educational disadvantages and the comparatively low social status of most of their number, they will bear a comparison with any Christians belonging to a similar station in life in England or anywhere else. Remembering that we never can know the private life of any class of people in England so well as we know the private life—if that can be called private which is perfectly public—of native Christians in this country, I maintain that the real earnest Christians of our Indian Missions have no need to shrink from comparison with the real earnest Christians in a similar station in life and similarly circumstanced in England or in any other part of the world. The style of character they exhibit is one which those who are well acquainted with them cannot but like. I think I do not exaggerate when I affirm that they appear to me in general more teachable and tractable, more considerate of the feelings of others and more respectful to superiors, more uniformly temperate, more patient and gentle, more trustful in Providence, better church-goers, yet freer from religious bigotry, and in proportion to their means more liberal, than Christians in England holding a similar position in the social scale. I do not for a moment pretend that they are free from imperfections; on the contrary, living amongst them as I do from day to day, I see their imperfections daily, and daily do I 'reprove, rebuke, exhort,' as I see need; but I am bound to say that when I have gone anywhere, and look back upon the Christians of this country from a distance, or compare them with what I have seen and known of Christians in other countries, I find that their good qualities have left a deeper impression in my mind than their imperfections. I do not know a perfect native Christian, and I may add that I do not know a perfect English Christian; but this I see and know, that in both classes of Christians may be traced distinct marks and proofs of the power of the Gospel, new sympathies and virtues, and a new and heavenward aim.

I will add a fact, which must necessarily appear a very

convincing one to myself. There lived a native Christian a few years ago—rather I should say there lives, for he still lives with God—with respect to whom I am able to say, and I say it without any disparagement of Christian brethren of my own nation, that I derived more benefit from my daily intercourse in daily labour with that ever earnest, ever humble, ever spiritually-minded man, than I did from any other person whatever during the whole period of my labours in these parts. I boldly say, therefore, that I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, or of the efforts that are being made for its propagation in India. I see that here, as elsewhere, ‘it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth,’ and my only anxiety is to see the number of persons that really believe increased.

I admit that persons of the class I speak of are few at present, sometimes only one or two such persons can be pointed out in a small country congregation, sometimes scarcely even one, whilst four or five such persons in a congregation containing a hundred souls of all ages would be regarded in most cases as evincing a more than ordinarily satisfactory state of things. But if this should be represented as a reason for holding that the Gospel, or the propagation of the Gospel in India, does not produce the same effects as in England, I cannot forget how often I have heard clergymen at home, especially in the country districts, lamenting the almost total absence of interest in religion, the absence of spiritual life, the absence of anything like real Christian piety in their own congregations, and in various congregations that they knew. Many a place I visited at home seemed a second Paradise to the outward eye, but on becoming better acquainted with the moral and religious condition of the people, I often found that its resemblance to Paradise disappeared very completely.

It is lamentable that such a state of things should exist, but it is lamentable wherever we find it, whether in England or in India, perhaps still more in England than in India; and I comfort myself with believing that so long as the results of the Gospel where it is really believed are in accordance with its profession, so long as it saves everyone who believes, how many or how few soever such persons may be, though there may be reason for our being ashamed of ourselves and of our nationalities, there is no reason why we should be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.”

LONDON :

R. CLAY, SONS, AND TAYLOR, PRINTERS.

BREAD STREET HILL.





